

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5122

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L NDJAMENA 3176

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, CD, US

SUBJECT: MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO CHAD

REF: NDJAMENA 3169

1. SUMMARY: DURING OUR CONVERSATION AT THE TIME OF THE DELIVERY OF TH
E
LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER (SEE REFTEL), PRESIDENT MALLOUM MADE
THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A) LIBYAN AGRESSION IN NORTHERN CHAD WAS BEING CARRIED
OUT AT SOVIET INSTRUCTIONS; B) WHILE CHAD GREATLY
APPRECIATED THE ASSISTANCE WE HAVE OFFERED TO DATE,
HE HOPED WE WOULD RECONSIDER THE MATTER OF HELICOPTERS
AND BOMBERS; AND C) HE OFFERED TO CONCLUDE SOME SORT
OF FORMAL MILITARY AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. FOR TRAINING
AND EQUIPMENT SIMILAR TO THAT IN EXISTENCE WITH
FRENCH. I DID NOT COMMENT ON SOVIET INVOLVEMENT WITH
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LIBYA. I CAUTIONED HIM THAT I THOUGHT BOMBERS WERE
OUT OF THE QUESTION, BUT DID AGREE TO RE-RAISE THE
POSSIBILITY OF HELICOPTERS, AND I TOLD HIM IN CASES
LIKE CHAD, WE SELDOM ENTER INTO A FULL SCALE MILI-
TARY AGREEMENT ARRANGEMENT BUT THAT WE WOULD
NEED CLOSE COOPERATION, PARTICULARLY IN TRAINING.

2. IN DELIVERING HIS LETTER TOVPRESIDENT CARTER, PRESIDENT MALLOUM AGAIN STRESSED THE URGENCY OF THE PRESENT CASE, STATING THAT ENEMY FORCES WERE CONTINUING TO MASS IN NORTHERN CHAD. HE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCE, LIBYA WAS MERELY ACTING ON BEHALF OF THE SOVIETS AND THE PURPOSE OF SEIZING TIBESTI WAS TO OUTFLANK EGYPT AND EVENTUALLY ISOLATE IT. HE SAID THAT ONCE THIS WAS DONE AND THESE SOVIET GAINS WERE CONSOLIDATED WITH THOSE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, SOVIET EFFORTS WOULD BE TURNED TO A SIMILAR ISOLATION OF MOROCCO. HE WENT ON TO POINT OUT THAT IT WAS STRONGLY IN THE U.S. INTERESTS AS WELL AS THOSE OF WESTERN EUROPE AND OTHER AFRICAN STATES, TO HALT THE SOVIET THRUST IN NORTHERN CHAD BEFORE IT GATHERED MOMENTUM. I MADE NO COMMENT ON THE SCENARIO, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT PRESIDENT MALLOUM HAS TALKED HIMSELF INTO BELIEVING IT.

3. I TOOK OCCASION OF OUR INTERVIEW TO RE-EXPLAIN IN DETAIL THE NATURE OF OUR PORPOSED ASSISTANCE TO CHAD AS WELL AS THE UNUSUAL NATURE OF OUR ENTERING INTO A NEW RELATIONSHIP. PRESIDENT MALLOUM WAS APPRECIATIVE OF WHAT WE WERE PREPARED TO DO AND WAS UNDER NO ILLUSION ABOUT THE NATURE OF OUR COMMITMENT. I PARTICULARLY POINTED OUT THAT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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NATURE OF OUR PROCEDURES MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO UNDERTAKE ANY DIRECT GRANT OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE. DESPITE HIS APPRECIATION FOR OUR PROPOSED PROGRAM, MALLOUM REITERATED THE SOVIET THREAT TO THE NORTH AND MADE A STRONG PLEA FOR RECONSIDERATION OF THE INCLUSION OF BOMBERS AND HELICOPTERS IN OUR PROGRAM. I TOLD HIM THAT I HONESTLY THOUGHT BOMBERS WERE COMPLETELY OUT OF THE QUESTION, BUT THAT I WOULD RE-RAISE THE QUESTION OF UNARMED HELICOPTERS WITH WASHINGTON. HOWEVER, BEFORE DOING SO I WANTED TO BE SURE THAT THE FRENCH WERE NOT PREPARED TO AUGMENT THEIR PRESENT FORCEVHN HELICOPTERS AS IT SEEMED REDUNDANT INTORDUCING A NEW TYPE OF AIR-CRAFT INTO THE LIMITED CHADIAN MAINTENANCE SCENE. MALLOUM SEEMED SATISFIED WITH THIS SUGGESTION BUT DID , HOWEVER, WANT TO RAISE BOTH POINTS WO THAT WASHINGTON COULD BE GIVING THEM FURTHER CONSIDERATION.

4. THE PRESIDENT THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT IN VIEW OF THE NATURE OF OUR NEW RELATIONSHIP, HE WONDERED IF WE SHOULD NOT HAVE A MILITARY ACCORD

SIMILAR TO THAT BETWEEN CHAD AND FRANCE. I TOLD HIM THAT NORMALLY, IN PROGRAMS SUCH AS THOSE ON WHICH WE WERE ABOUT TO EMBARK IN CHAD, WE DID NOT GO INTO A FULL SCALE MILITARY AGREEMENT ARRANGEMENT. HOWEVER, I ADDED THAT CLOSE COOPERATION WOULD BE NECESSARY IN DETERMINING THE TYPES OF EQUIPMENT COVERED AND ARRANGING FOR APPROPRIATE TRAINING.

5. OUR MEETING WAS MOST CORDIAL AND PRESIDENT WAS OBVIOUSLY MOST APPRECIATIVE OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER AND HIS RECENT DETERMINATION ON THE ELIGIBILITY OF CHAD TO PURCHASE AMERICAN EQUIPMENT.

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